

filed in the United States for the purposes of this subsection based on the filing of an international application filed under the defined in Section 351(a).

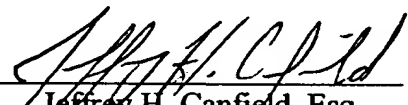
In the present case the patent application from which U.S. Patent No. 6,405,249 issued was filed in the United States on January 11, 1999. Applicants priority extends back to September 30, 1998. Thus, the application from which U.S. Patent 6,405,249 issued was filed in the United States after Applicant's date of invention. Therefore, U.S. Patent No. 6,405,249 is disqualified from being considered prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)(2). As such the rejection of claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 is improper and should be withdrawn.

For these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims as they presently stand all in condition for allowance. Applicant therefore requests that the Examiner allow the claims move the application to issue. However, if there are any remaining issues the Examiner is encourage to call Applicants' attorney, Jeffrey H. Canfield at (312) 807-4233 in order to facilitate a speedy disposition of the present case.

If any additional fees are required in connection with this response they may be charged to deposit account no. 02-1818.

Respectfully submitted,

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